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[54] TWO-PIECE LOCK WITH HIDDEN LOCKING MECHANISM

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[57] ABSTRACT

[21] Appl. No.: **09/338,497**

A two-piece lock comprises a male connector; a locking mechanism provided on the male connector including a pair of connecting rods each having a rod portion and a slope portion, a pair of springs each putting on one of the rod portions, a tube member for receiving the springs and the rod portions on two opposite sides having a longitudinal center opening and a transverse center hole, a movable member having a head portion and a recessed body portion, and a pair of connecting members each pivotably connecting the rod portions and the recessed body portion which is pivotably secured to the tube member by inserting a fixing means through the transverse center hole and a predetermined position of the recessed body portion; and a female connector comprising a pair of holes on two opposite sides each receiving one of the slope portions in a locked position, and a recessed portion for receiving the head portion. As such, the locking mechanism is only seen by the head portion of the movable member for achieving a hidden safety mechanism. Further, the safety mechanism is enhanced by requiring to apply a predetermined force to slide the head portion of the movable member toward a predetermined direction prior to opening the lock.

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[52] U.S. Cl. **24/625; 24/614; 24/589; 24/613; 24/605**

[58] Field of Search **24/589, 605, 1, 24/607, 612, 616, 613, 614, 615, 618, 625, 265 WS, 265 B**

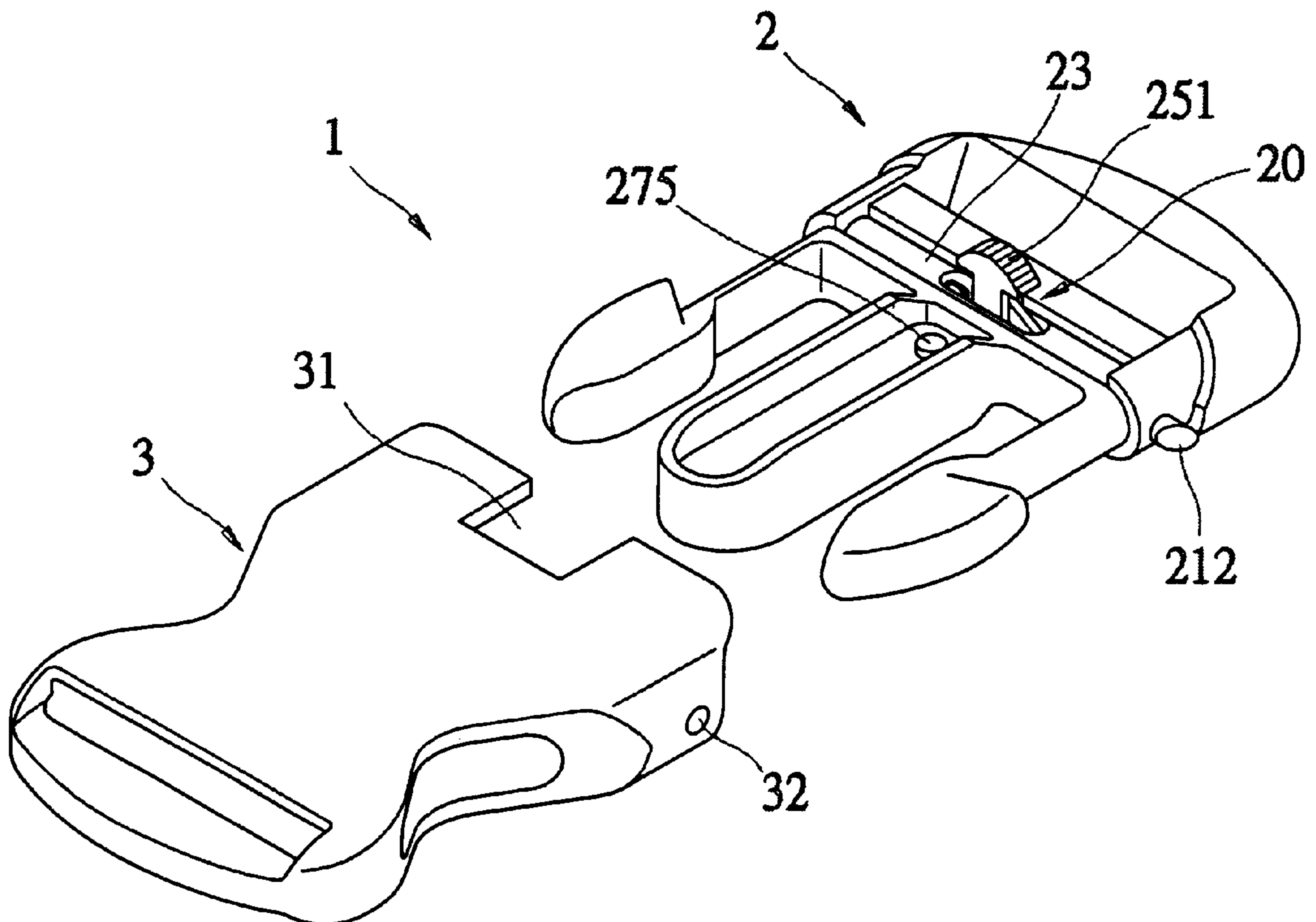
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Primary Examiner—James R. Brittain

7 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



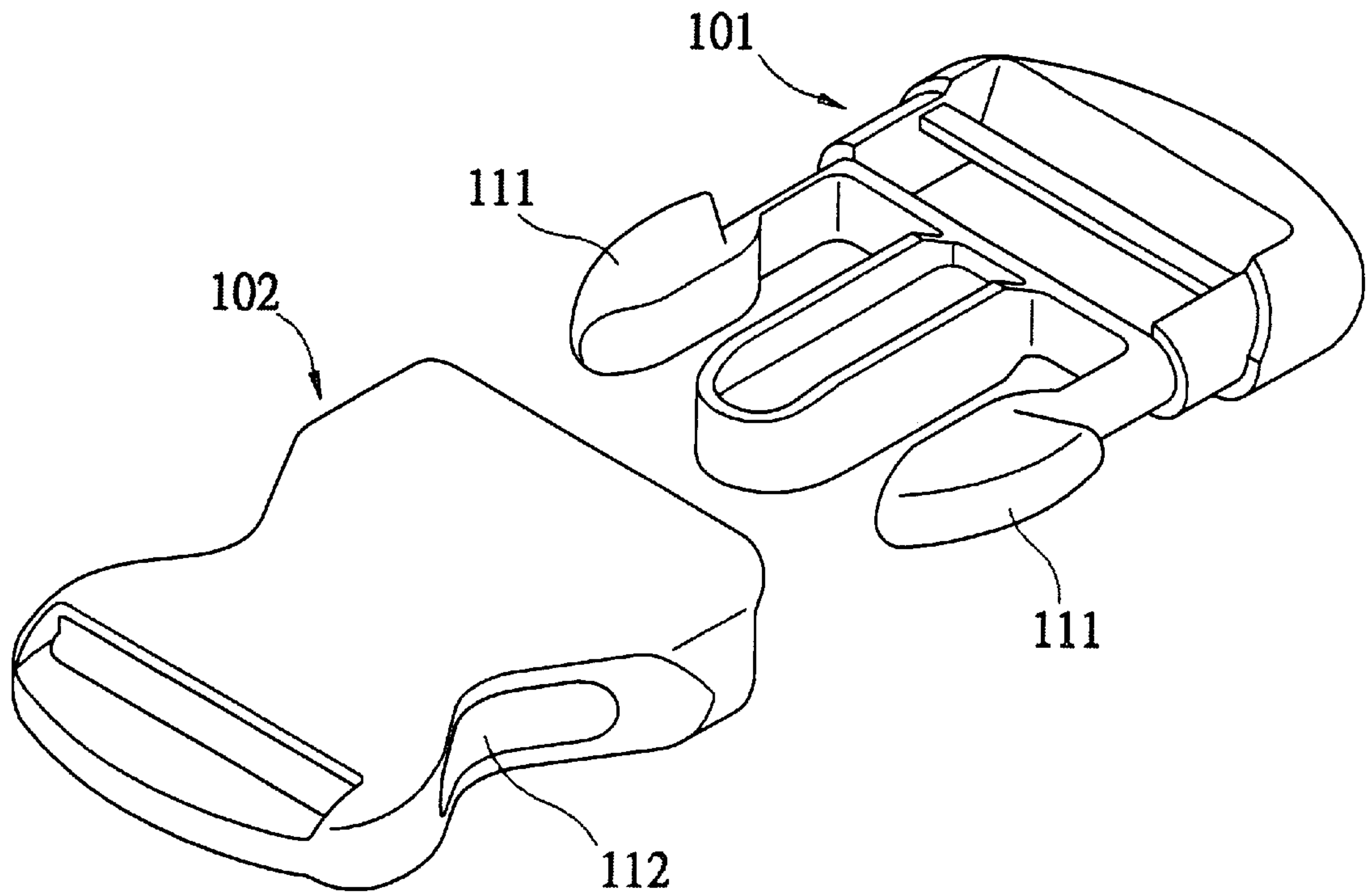


FIG. 1A (PRIOR ART)

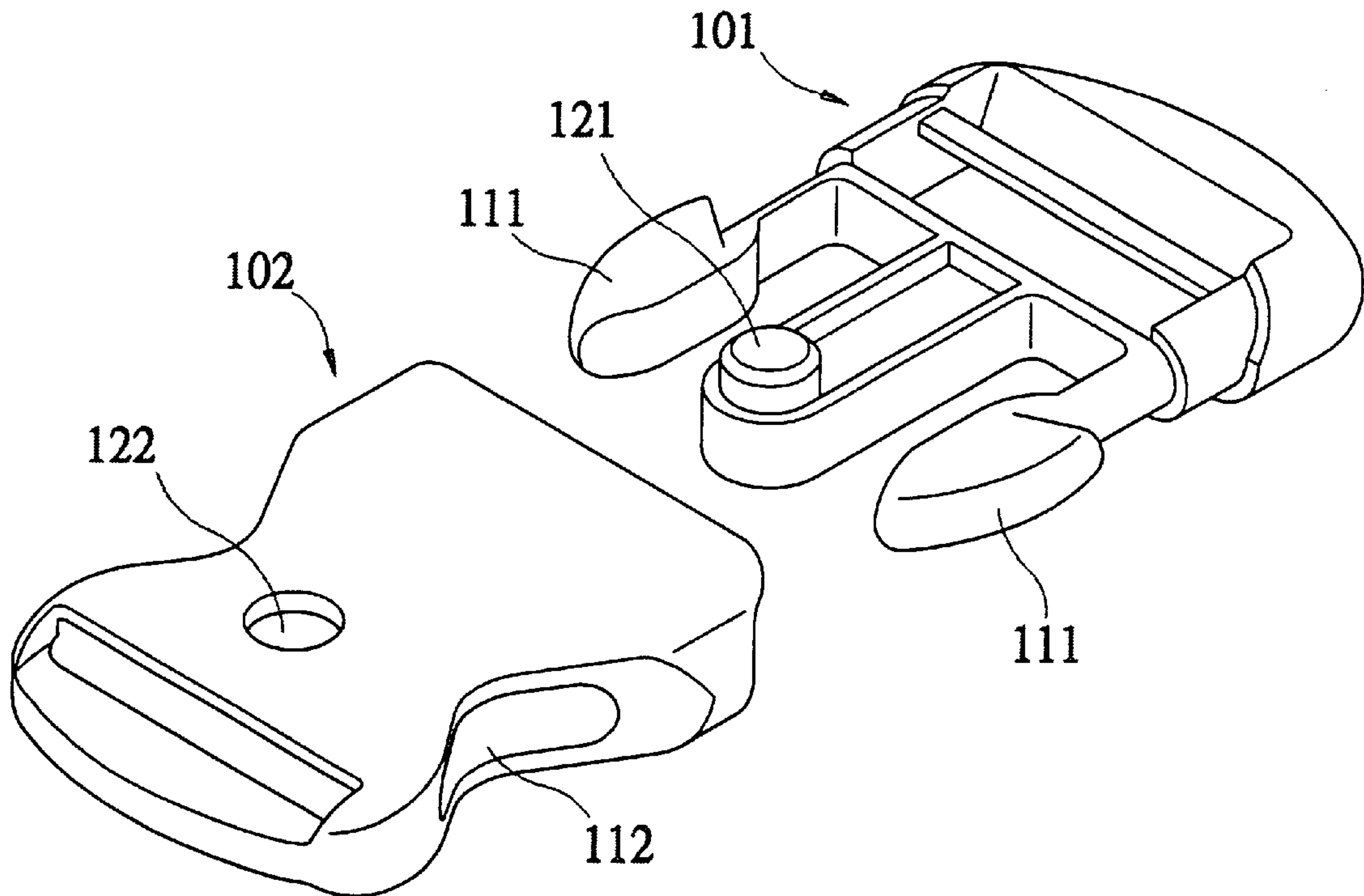


FIG. 1B (PRIOR ART)

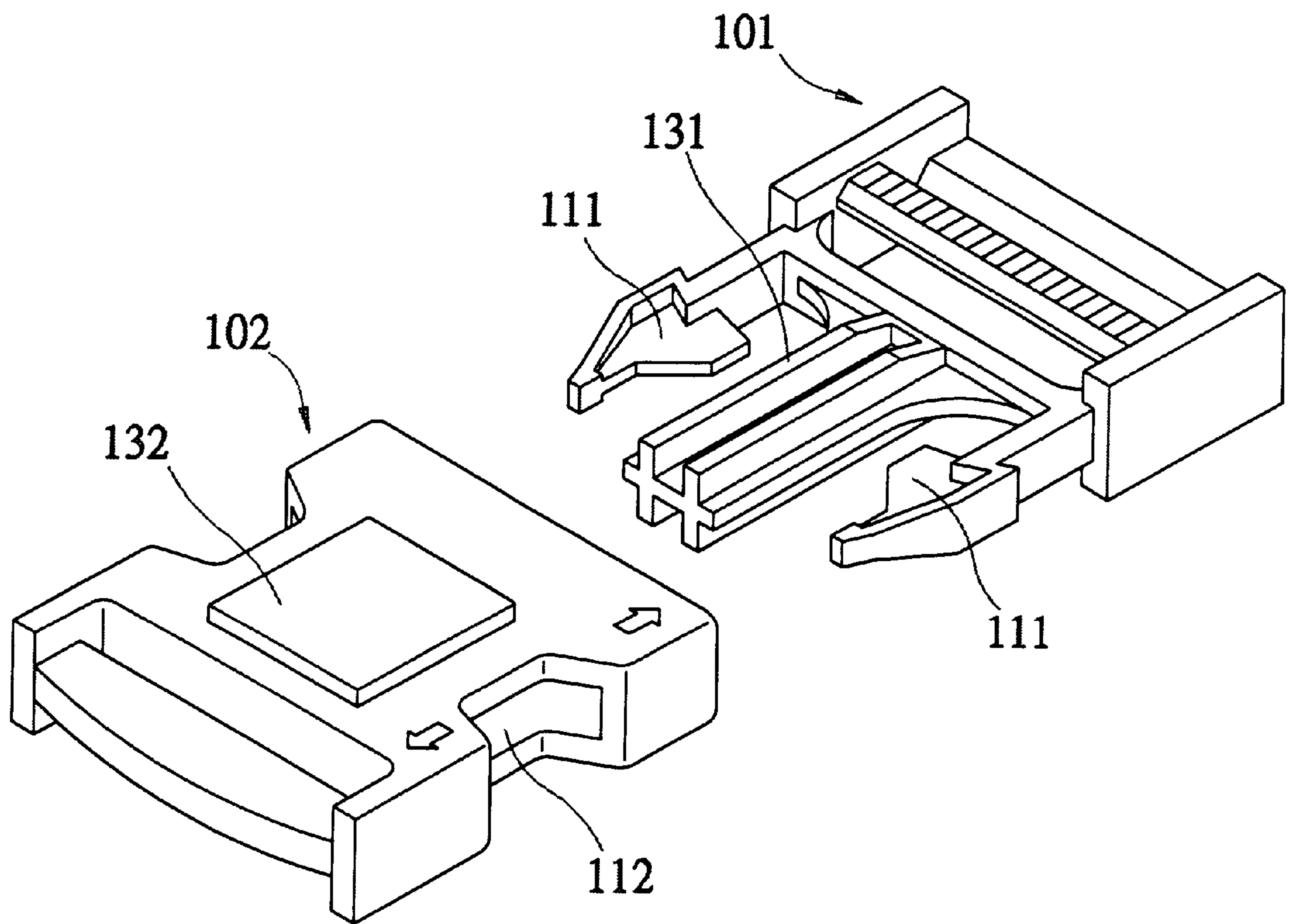


FIG. 1C(PRIOR ART)

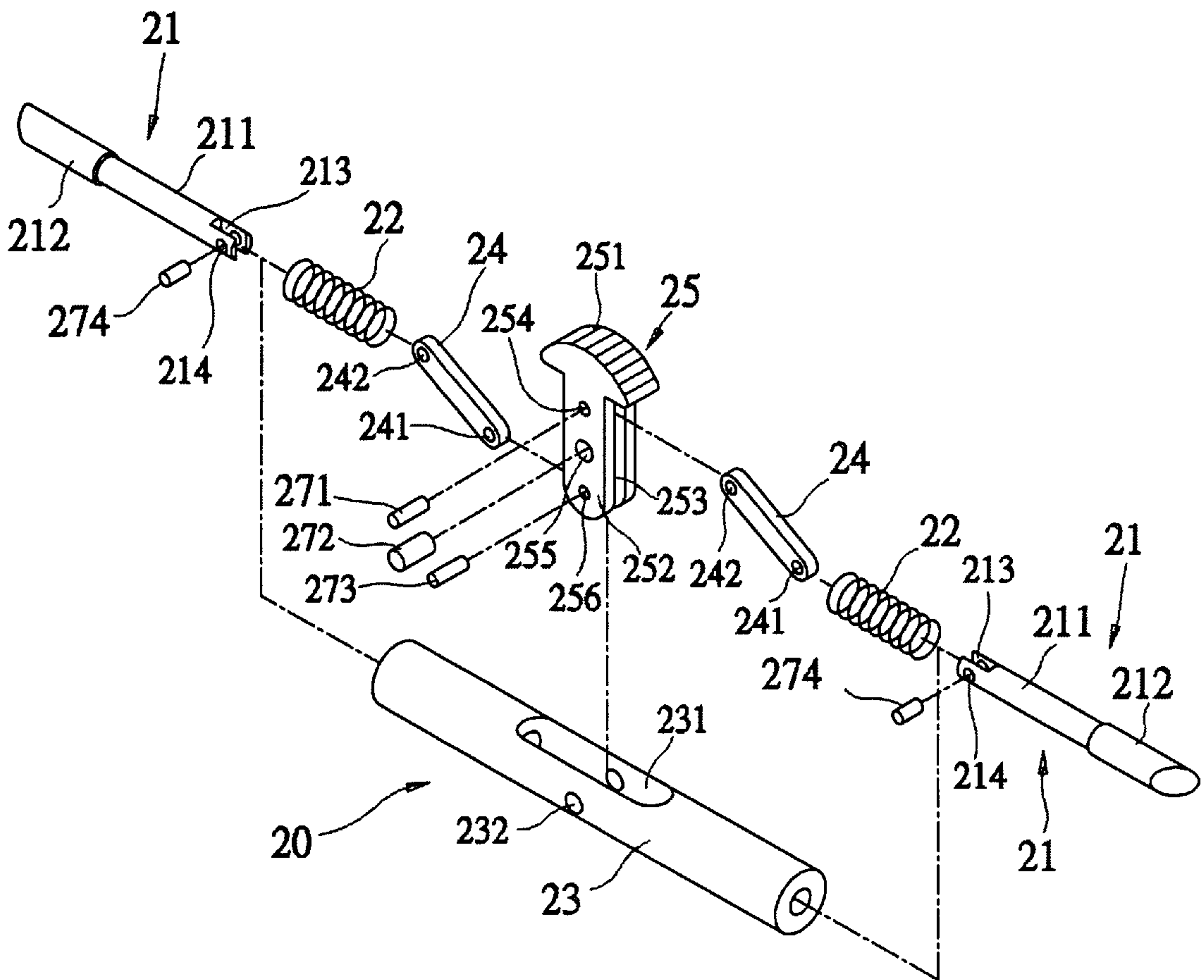


FIG. 2

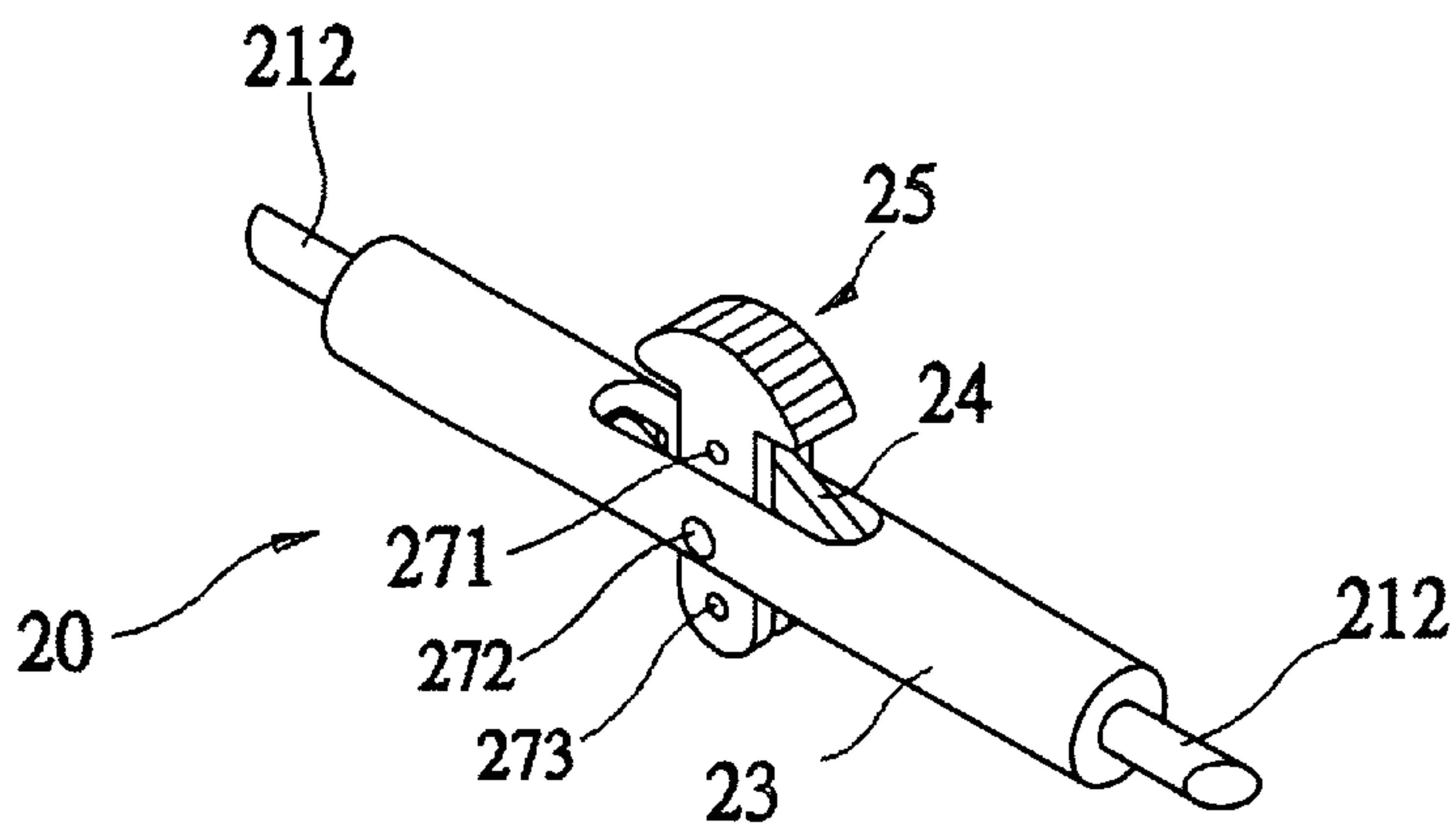


FIG. 3

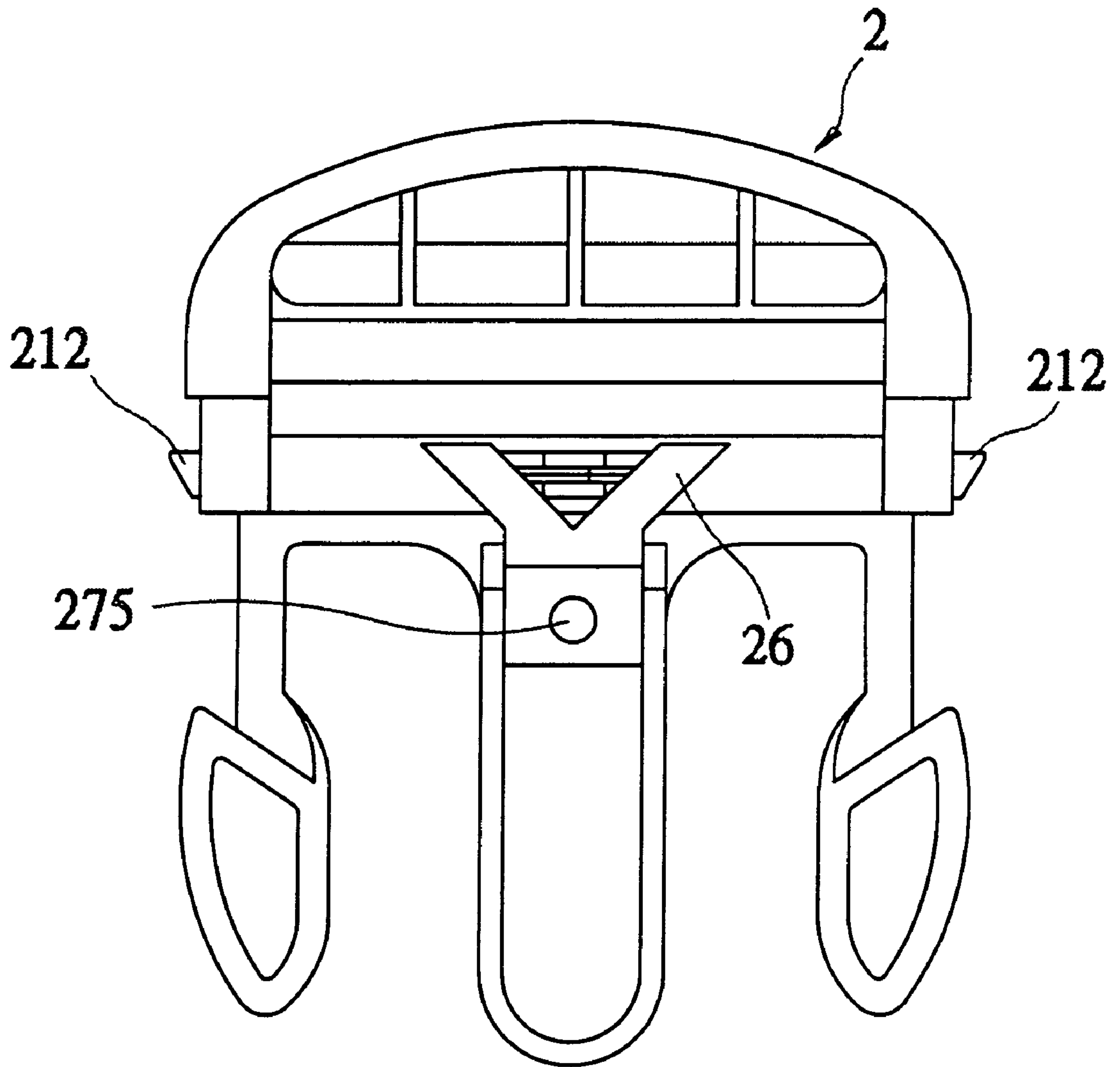


FIG. 4

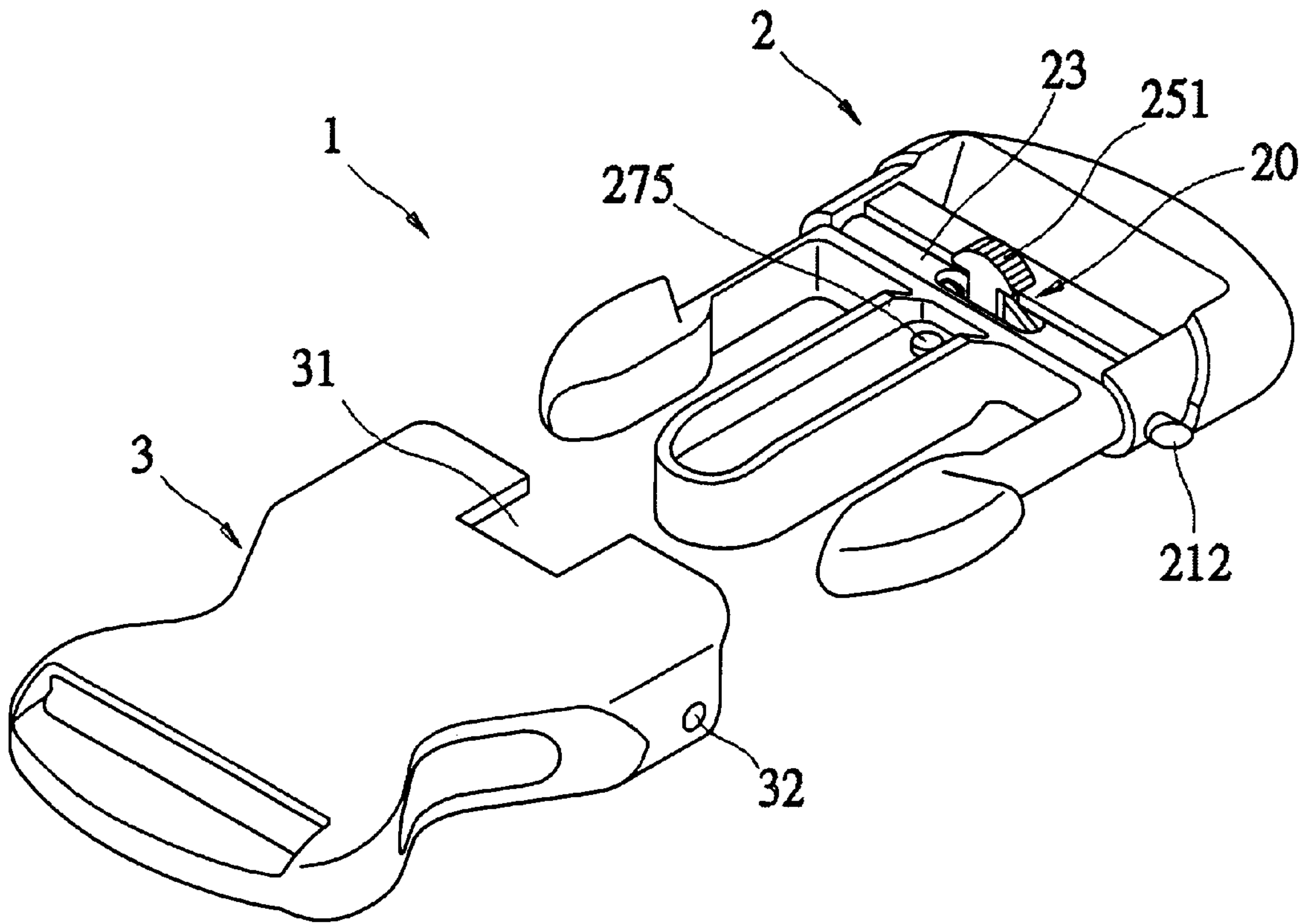


FIG. 5

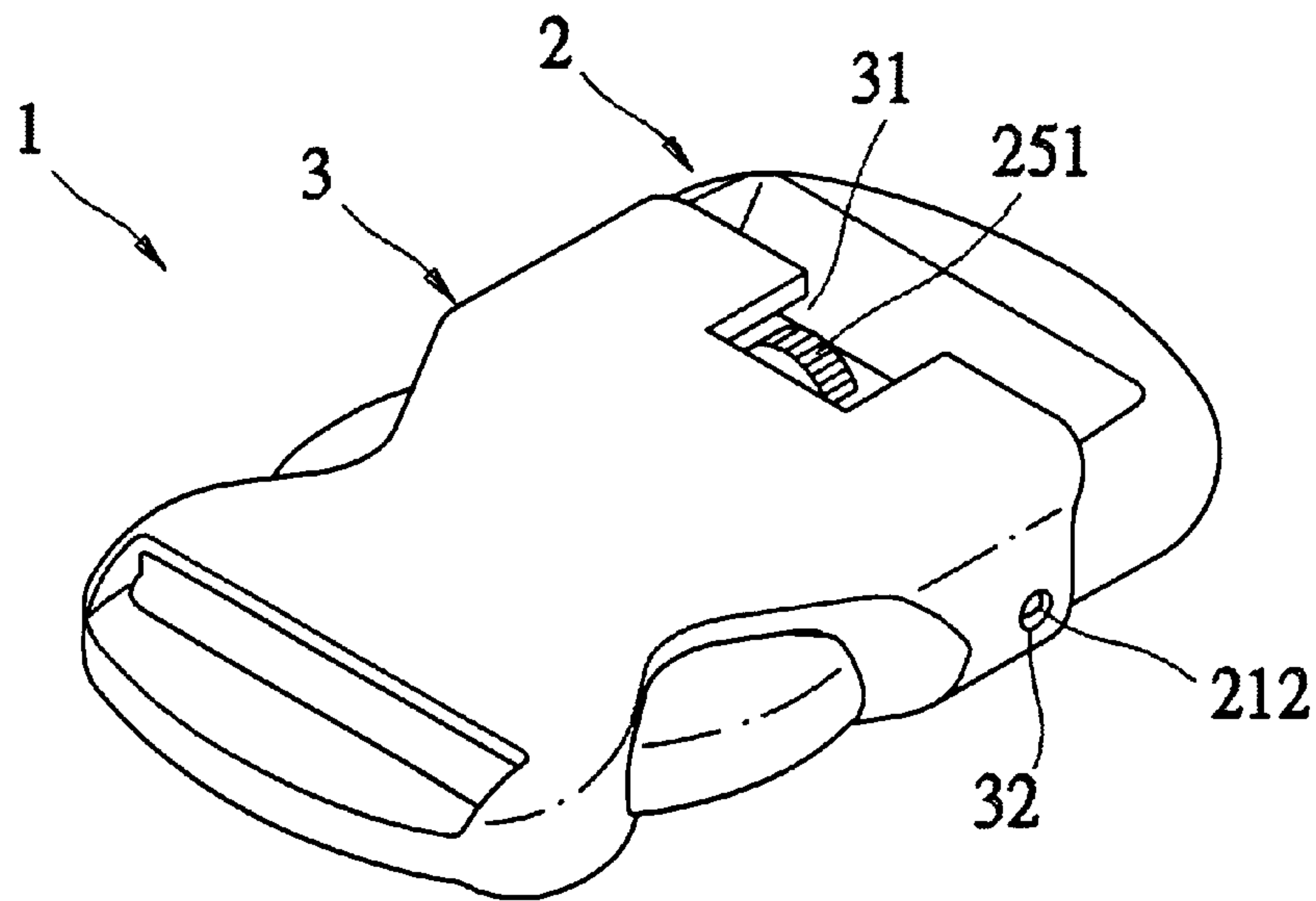


FIG. 6

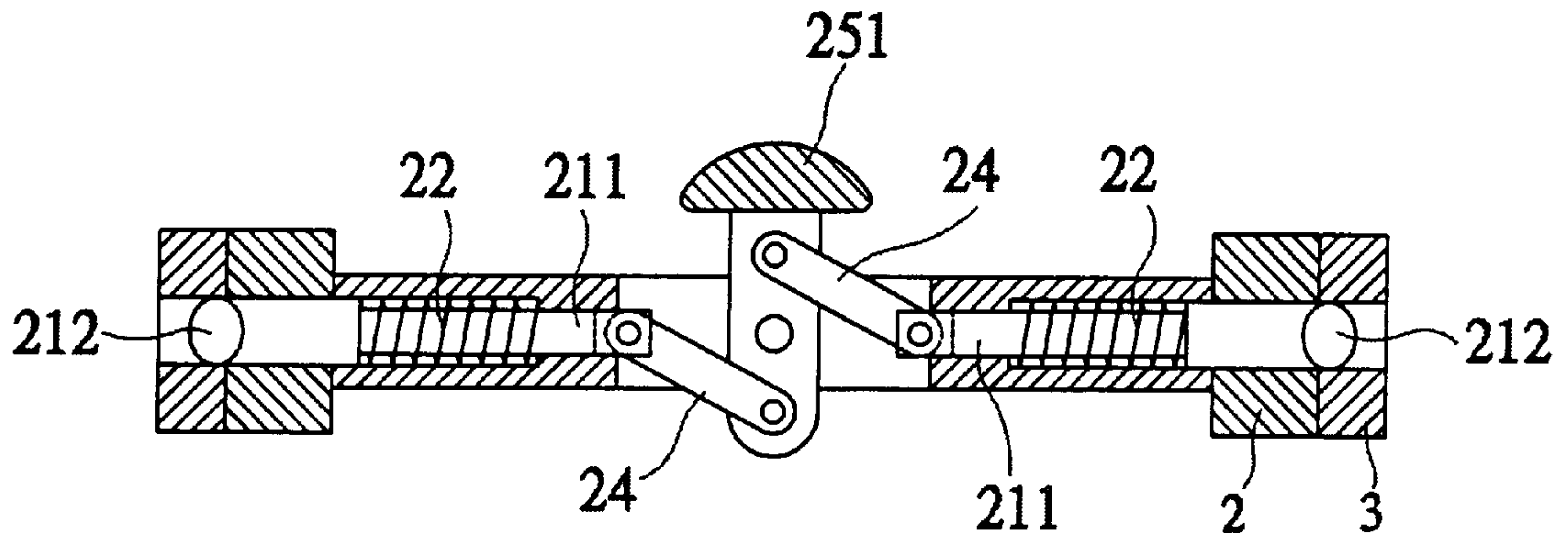


FIG. 7

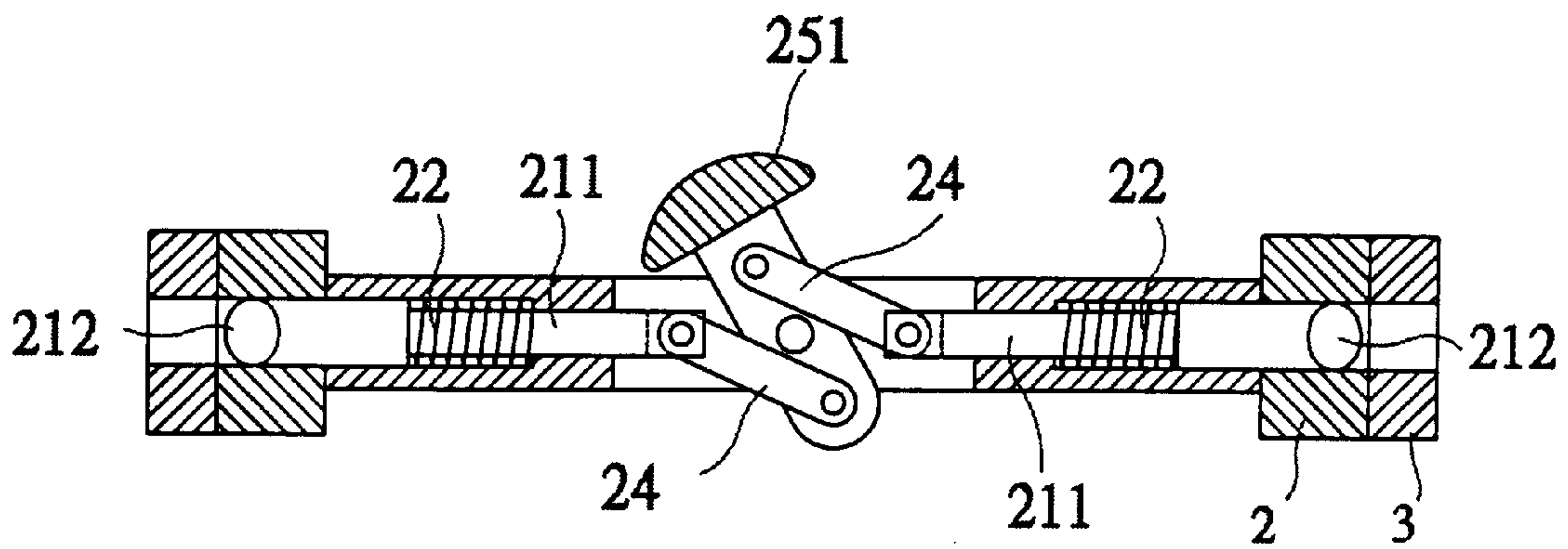


FIG. 8

TWO-PIECE LOCK WITH HIDDEN LOCKING MECHANISM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a two-piece lock, and more particularly to a two-piece lock with hidden locking mechanism in order to form a safety device.

2. Description of Related Art

A first prior art two-piece lock is shown in FIG. 1. The safety mechanism is achieved by inserting a male connector **101** into a female connector **102** such that a pair of flexible projections **111** are locked in a pair of corresponding cavities **112**. However, the flexible projections **111** are subject to be pressed inward incidentally because part of it is exposed to outside. The safety mechanism becomes neutralized if such occurs.

A second prior art two-piece lock is shown in FIG. 2. Similarly, the safety mechanism is substantially achieved by inserting the male connector **101** into the female connector **102** such that the pair of flexible projections **111** are locked in the pair of corresponding cavities **112**. Further, the safety mechanism is enhanced by providing an elastic raised member **121** and a hole **122** which are interlocked when the male connector **101** is inserted into the female connector **102**. However, the flexible projections **111** and the elastic raised member **121** are subject to be pressed inward incidentally because part of them are exposed to outside. The safety mechanism also becomes neutralized if such occurs.

A third prior art two-piece lock is shown in FIG. 3. The safety mechanism is substantially achieved by inserting the male connector **101** into the female connector **102** such that the pair of flexible projections **111** are locked in the pair of corresponding cavities **112**. Further, the safety mechanism is enhanced by providing a projection **131** and an elastic button **132** which are interlocked when the male connector **101** is inserted into the female connector **102**. However, the flexible projections **111** and the elastic button **132** are subject to be pressed inward incidentally because part of them are exposed to outside. The safety mechanism again becomes neutralized if such occurs.

Thus, it is desirable to provide an improved two-piece lock with hidden locking mechanism in order to overcome the above drawbacks of prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a two-piece lock comprising a male connector; a locking mechanism provided on the male connector including a pair of connecting rods each having a rod portion and a sloped portion, a pair of springs each placed on one of the rod portions, a tube member for receiving the springs and the rod portions on two opposite sides having a longitudinal center opening and a transverse center hole, a movable member having a head portion and a recessed body portion, and a pair of connecting members each pivotally connecting the rod portions and the recessed body portion which is further pivotally secured to the tube member by inserting a fixing means through the transverse center hole and a predetermined position of the recessed body portion; and a female connector comprising a pair of holes on two opposite sides each receiving one of the sloped portions in a locked position, and a recessed portion for receiving the head portion. As such, the locking mechanism is only seen by the head portion of the movable member for achieving a hidden

safety mechanism. Further, the safety mechanism is enhanced by requiring a predetermined force to slide the head portion of the movable member toward a predetermined direction prior to opening the lock.

The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A–1C are perspective views of a first, a second, and a third prior art two-piece locks respectively;

FIG. 2 is an exploded view of a locking mechanism of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the locking mechanism of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a bottom plan view of a male connector of the present invention;

FIG. 5 a perspective view of the present invention in which the male connector is separated from a female connector;

FIG. 6 is another perspective view of the present invention in which the male connector is inserted into the female connector; and

FIGS. 7–8 are cross-sectional views of the locking mechanism and part of the female connector for showing a locked and an open positions respectively.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIG. 2, there is shown an exploded view of a locking mechanism **20** constructed according to the invention. The locking mechanism **20** includes a pair of connecting rods **21** each having a rod portion **211** and a sloped portion **212**, a pair of springs **22**, a tube member **23** having a center opening **231** and a center hole **232**, a pair of connecting members **24**, and a movable member **25**. The rod portion **211** has a receiving space **213** and a hole **214** both on the left end. The connecting member **24** has a first hole **241** on one side and a second hole **242** on the opposite side. The movable member **25** comprises a head portion **251** and a body portion **252** having a receiving space **253** and three holes **254**, **255**, and **256**.

The assembly of the locking mechanism **2** is described as follows.

As to the components on the right side such as the connecting rod **21**, the spring **22**, and the connecting member **24**, firstly, place the spring **22** on the rod portion **21**. Then, put the right end of the connecting member **24** into the receiving space **213**, and use a rivet **274** to fasten the connecting member **24** and the connecting rod **21** together by inserting through the hole **214**, the first hole **241**, and the receiving space **213**. Then, insert the connected connecting rod **21**, the spring **22**, and the connecting member **24** into the tube member **23** from the right end thereof until the second hole **242** located substantially on the center of the opening **231**. Note that until this stage the assembly of components on the left side of the movable member **25** is the same as that on the right side of the movable member **25**. Thus, a detailed description thereof will be omitted herein for the sake of brevity. Then, insert the movable member **25** into the opening **231** with the hole **255** of the movable member **25** disposed correspondingly to the hole **232** of the opening **231**. Then, use a rivet **271** to fasten the right connecting member **24** and the movable member **25** together by insert-

ing through the hole 254 and the second hole 242 of the right connecting member 24. Then, use a rivet 272 to fasten the tube member 23 and the movable member 25 together by inserting through the hole 232 and the hole 255. Finally, use a rivet 273 to fasten the left connecting member 24 and the movable member 25 together by inserting through the hole 256 and the first hole 241 of the left connecting member 24 to form an assembled locking mechanism 20 as shown in FIG. 3. The connecting members 24 are pivotable on the rivets 271 and 273 within the receiving space 253 in a limited range, while the movable member 25 is pivotable on the rivet 272 in another limited range.

In FIG. 4, a flexible Y-shaped projection 26 is fixed to the center of a male connector 2 by a rivet 275. Such that the projection 26 can act as enhancing the safety mechanism.

A two-piece lock 1 of the invention comprising the male connector 2 and a female connector 3 is illustrated in FIG. 5 in which the male connector 2 is separated from the female connector 3, i.e., prior to being locked. The female connector 3 comprises a pair of holes 32 (only one is shown) on two opposite sides and a recessed portion 31. It is seen that the slope portion 212 is extended a predetermined distance from the surface of the male connector 2. Note that the sloped portions 212 are movable within the tube member 23 by the expansion and compression of the spring 22, or by exerting a force on the sloped portions 212. As such, the sloped portions 212 are received within the holes 32 when the male connector 2 is inserted into the female connector 3 to form the locked twopiece lock 1 as illustrated in FIG. 6. Note that only the head portion 251 is seen from outside, i.e., received in the recessed portion 31, while all other components of the locking mechanism 20 are hidden within the lock 1.

The locked locking mechanism 20 is illustrated in FIG. 7. It is seen that the movable member 25 is on an upright position. Further, the top end of the sloped portions 212 are in the join of the male connector 2 and female connector 3.

It is required to apply a predetermined force in order to slide the head portion 251. Then, the right connecting member 240 extends to left, while the left connecting member 240 extends to right which in turn compress the springs 22 to force the rod portions 211 and the slope portions 212 move inwardly. As such, the slope portions 212 are completely received within the male connector 2 as

shown in FIG. 8. Finally, pull the male connector 2 out of the female connector 3 in order to open the lock 1.

While the invention herein disclosed has been described by means of specific embodiments, numerous modifications and variations could be made thereto by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention set forth in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A lock comprising a male connector, a locking mechanism provided on the male connector including a pair of connecting rods each having a rod portion and a sloped portion, a pair of springs each placed on one of the rod portions, a tube member for receiving the springs and the rod portions on two opposite sides having a longitudinal center opening and a transverse center hole, a movable member having a head portion and a recessed body portion, and a pair of connecting members each pivotally connecting the rod portions and the recessed body portion by a first fixing means; and

a female connector comprising a pair of holes on two opposite sides each receiving one of the sloped portions in a locked position, and a recessed portion for receiving the head portion;

wherein the recessed body portion is pivotally secured to the tube member by inserting a second fixing means through the transverse center hole and a predetermined position of the recessed body portion.

2. The lock of claim 1, wherein the sloped portions are received within the male connector in an open position.

3. The lock of claim 1, wherein the predetermined position is a center of the recessed body portion.

4. The lock of claim 1, wherein the first fixing means is a rivet.

5. The lock of claim 1, wherein the second fixing means is a rivet.

6. The lock of claim 1, wherein the head portion is only allowed to move toward a predetermined direction when a predetermined force is applied on it prior to opening the lock.

7. The lock of claim 6, wherein the predetermined direction is from right to left.

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